CROCODILES IN BOHOL: SAVORING THE CHOCOLATE HILLS

"It's an eyesore on the natural beauty of Chocolate Hills"
- Lina Araneta

Philippines is known for its geological landscapes. One of them is situated in the island province of Bohol, known as Chocolate Hills. It is the National Geological Monument and the province's signature attraction, and coming from the law itself, it is permitted that there shall be no construction of any buildings that may ruin the landscape. However, if one decides to break this law for greed and money, it can ultimately lead to irreversible damage.

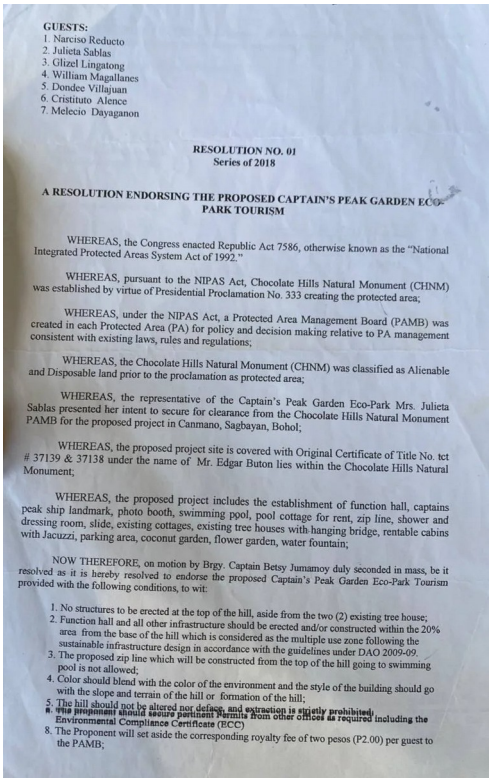
A vlog posted on Facebook by Renmark Nisnisan, also known as "Ren the Adventurer" on March 6, 2024 showed the Captain's Peak Garden and Resort that was located in the middle of the Chocolate Hills. Edgar Buton, the owner of the resort, thanked him for featuring his resort to the world and social media. However, the vlog has rather caught the attention of the Filipinos as they were actually infuriated with what they had watched, with the post having at least 173,000 total angry reactions.

According to the National Integrated Areas System (NIPAS) under the Republic Act No. 7586, it stated that the classification and management of designated protected areas aim to preserve essential ecological processes and life-support systems, conserve genetic diversity, promote sustainable resource use, and maintain their natural conditions as much as possible.

Under the Proclamation No. 1037, s. 1997, Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos, the late President of the Philippines proclaimed that the natural landscape of all the 1,776 hills in the Bohol Chocolate Hills must be protected, preserved and maintained. Any activities similar to the quarrying, which can destroy, deface, mutilate the hills, shall be greatly prohibted.

In addition to the law, the Interior Secretary Benjamins Abalos Jr., he stated that "Any activities that disturb or damages protected areas such as the Chocolate Hills, without proper authorization, is prohibited by law." The law has already stated that it is not allowed to construct buildings in protected areas, and yet it is so frustrating to why they still did it. The rules of the law are simple, and they are made to maintain peace and sustainability in the environment and between us humans, yet, why do we still fail to follow something that's so simple and was meant for the greater good?

Although, the construction that was created in the protected areas is against the law. Edgar Buton has presented that he has legal papers in where he asked for the government's approval of project by the Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR) Central Visayas, Director Gilbert Gonzales III on February 15, 2018, with the reasoning stated that it is only "within the 20% area from the base of the hill, which is considered the multiple use zone." Not only that, he is also permitted by the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) and also had the approval of Sagbayan local officials.



GUESTS:
1. Narciso Reducto
2. Julieta Sablas
3. Glizel Lingatong
4. William Magallanes
5. Dondee Villajuan
6. Cristituto Alence
7. Melecio Dayaganon

RESOLUTION NO. 01
Series of 2018

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE PROPOSED CAPTAIN'S PEAK GARDEN ECO-PARK TOURISM

WHEREAS, the Congress enacted Republic Act 7586, otherwise known as the "National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992."

WHEREAS, pursuant to the NIPAS Act, Chocolate Hills Natural Monument (CHNM) was established by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 333 creating the protected area;

WHEREAS, under the NIPAS Act, a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) was created in each Protected Area (PA) for policy and decision making relative to PA management consistent with existing laws, rules and regulations;

WHEREAS, the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument (CHNM) was classified as Alienable and Disposable land prior to the proclamation as protected area;

WHEREAS, the representative of the Captain's Peak Garden Eco-Park Mrs. Julieta Sablas presented her intent to secure for clearance from the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument PAMB for the proposed project in Canmano, Sagbayan, Bohol;

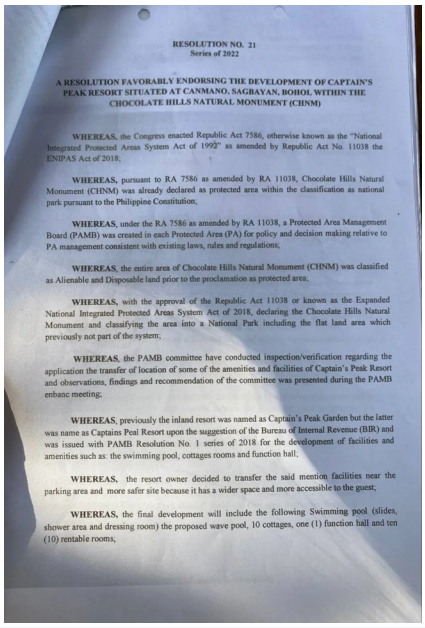
WHEREAS, the proposed project site is covered with Original Certificate of Title No. tct # 37139 & 37138 under the name of Mr. Edgar Buton lies within the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument;

WHEREAS, the proposed project includes the establishment of function hall, captains peak ship landmark, photo booth, swimming pool, pool cottage for rent, zip line, shower and dressing room, slide, existing cottages, existing tree houses with hanging bridge, rentable cabins with Jacuzzi, parking area, coconut garden, flower garden, water fountain;

NOW THEREFORE, on motion by Brgy. Captain Betsy Jumamoy duly seconded in mass, be it resolved as it is hereby resolved to endorse the proposed Captain's Peak Garden Eco-Park Tourism provided with the following conditions, to wit:

1. No structures to be erected at the top of the hill, aside from the two (2) existing tree house;
2. Function hall and all other infrastructure should be erected and/or constructed within the 20% area from the base of the hill which is considered as the multiple use zone following the sustainable infrastructure design in accordance with the guidelines under DAO 2009-09.
3. The proposed zip line which will be constructed from the top of the hill going to swimming pool is not allowed;
4. Color should blend with the color of the environment and the style of the building should go with the slope and terrain of the hill or formation of the hill;
5. The hill should not be altered nor defiled, and extraction is strictly prohibited;
6. The proponent should secure pertinent Permits from other offices as required including the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC)
8. The Proponent will set aside the corresponding royalty fee of two pesos (P2.00) per guest to the PAMB;

The copy of the resolution signed by DENR Central Visayas Director Gilbert Gonzales III.



RESOLUTION NO. 21
Series of 2022

A RESOLUTION FAVORABLY ENDORSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPTAIN'S PEAK RESORT SITUATED AT CANMANO, SAGBAYAN, BOHOL WITHIN THE CHOCOLATE HILLS NATURAL MONUMENT (CHNM)

WHEREAS, the Congress enacted Republic Act 7586, otherwise known as the "National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992" as amended by Republic Act No. 11038 the ENIPAS Act of 2018;

WHEREAS, pursuant to RA 7586 as amended by RA 11038, Chocolate Hills Natural Monument (CHNM) was already declared as protected area within the classification as national park pursuant to the Philippine Constitution;

WHEREAS, under the RA 7586 as amended by RA 11038, a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) was created in each Protected Area (PA) for policy and decision making relative to PA management consistent with existing laws, rules and regulations;

WHEREAS, the entire area of Chocolate Hills Natural Monument (CHNM) was classified as Alienable and Disposable land prior to the proclamation as protected area;

WHEREAS, with the approval of the Republic Act 11038 or known as the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018, declaring the Chocolate Hills Natural Monument and classifying the area into a National Park including the flat land area which previously not part of the system;

WHEREAS, the PAMB committee have conducted inspection/verification regarding the application the transfer of location of some of the amenities and facilities of Captain's Peak Resort and observations, findings and recommendation of the committee was presented during the PAMB enbanc meeting;

WHEREAS, previously the inland resort was named as Captain's Peak Garden but the latter was name as Captains Peal Resort upon the suggestion of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and was issued with PAMB Resolution No. 1 series of 2018 for the development of facilities and amenities such as: the swimming pool, cottages rooms and function hall;

WHEREAS, the resort owner decided to transfer the said mention facilities near the parking area and more safer site because it has a wider space and more accessible to the guest;

WHEREAS, the final development will include the following Swimming pool (slides, shower area and dressing room) the proposed wave pool, 10 cottages, one (1) function hall and ten (10) rentable rooms;

A copy of the resolution signed by DENR Central Visayas Director Paquito Melicor Jr. on July 14, 2022.

This does not deny the fact that even with all those papers, the management still doesn't have an Environmental Compliance Certificate

(ECC). This document refers to the DENR-EMB that allows a proposed project to proceed to the next stage. Having an ECC permit is a requirement for projects that could have potential to cause significant environmental impacts, which makes it a necessary step; but they did not have one at all.

However, there is one thing that further bothers the nation. The Buton family would not have obtained the title land located in the Chocolate Hills without the approval of the government themselves. Many have suspected that the government had something to do with the Resort. The money bought for the title and the earned money that was enjoyed by the people in the resort might be shared with the people connected in agreeing to approve the buying of the land, although this can be hard to prove, but the chances are high.

The area will be under the care of the administrative supervision and control by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, with the objective to protect and maintain the chocolate hills. If they were the ones who would supposedly protect the land, then why did they approve the Buton family to construct a resort, and also have a title of the land?

To furthermore, the higher power of authority had already stated about this issue, and yet it intrigues the community as to why the political power of the local government promises and is given the responsibility in protecting the environment, and is unexpectedly now mixed with commercial interest that could destroy our mother earth.

This proves how greedy we are, with how we are very willing to damage something that’s not even ours in the first place. The environment is there to provide us with the resources that we need in our day-to-day lives, but us humans decide to take power and ruin it for greed. What we should do is spread more awareness about how we should preserve our environment, so that the higher authorities will notice. When one decides to break the law for greed and money, it can be the leading problem cause for unchangeable damage, and that is the answer for our endless suffering.

A STUDENT'S BATTLE: SELF VS SELF

COLUMN ARTICLE BY: KAY FRANCINE G. ONGSUCO

Students are meant to achieve in striving their dreams, not dreams of wanting to end their lives.

Bottling up your problems, feelings, and thoughts can be a result of depression. Students are mainly the ones who are affected by depression, which causes them to feel a persistent feeling of sadness, loss of interest, and difficulty with thinking, eating, and sleeping. This is life-threatening for students; not only does it deteriorate their mental health, but it can also lead to self-harm or suicidal tendencies.

Out of 308 student participants, 79.2% of them unfortunately suffer from depression. Those 79.2% of students often experience symptoms such as having low energy, changes in eating behavior, difficulty sleeping, loss of interest in hobbies and activities, irritability, and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

During the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we only had ourselves. There's a difference between talking to someone online and talking to them personally. There was no one to interact with personally and no one to share our feelings with, and this imposed great and dangerous impacts on students' health, where results revealed that students endure anxiety with 89.1%, and depression with 72.1%.

Now that society has gone back to normal, the transitioning phase of being an anti-social student to interacting with your peers was hard. Some already had their friend groups, and you on the other hand, did not even know what their names were. It felt very lonely and depressing.

But as days go by, you started to adjust to your environment. The current problem you had to face now was properly managing your time with

the schoolworks given. Based on experience, all of the performance tasks and the quizzes would happen 5 days before the periodical exam, and in moments like these, all that you feel like doing is either cram or cry and stress about it — and it's not just us who are going through these kinds of experiences.

According to Steven Zauderer, on the study about the students' stress statistics. Students in highschool admit to being stressed with 45%, and 50% of middle school reported feeling stressed about academics. This shows how it is only not adults who are struggling, and we shouldn't judge the youth for often being so sluggish after school. Students deserve to rest, even if they use their phones after school, it is only meant to unwind themselves. However, it is still important to limit their use of social media as it can also be a significant cause for depression.

Social Media is a software platform that allows people to share their interests and interact with other users. There are advantages and disadvantages in social media. However, its main issue right now is how it can lead to depressive tendencies in students. Based on the study by Child Mind Institute, it is shown that young adults or students spend most of their time on social media and have a 13-66% higher rate of repression.

One of the main reasons that social media causes a greater chance of depression is because of Cyberbullying. It can affect their mental health as it can cause a decrease in confidence, self-esteem, and an increase in the possibility of getting stressed and procrastinating. This can result in their grades dropping and losing motivation in going to school.

Another factor that causes depression is family problems, this could go the same for social problems. Disagreements and arguments among the family members can cause depression in a number of ways, for instance, unhealthy family dynamics. One of the experiences as a student is when you don't even have the will to go home. In other words, home doesn't feel like home anymore. Home is supposed to make you feel at ease and stress free, but it's different when you have unsupportive, and lack of emotionally intelligent parents.

A statistics by National Library of Medicine found that 11% of children have healthy relationships with their family, and are living with biological parents. On the other hand, the percentage of students who have disruption

in their family structure is 89%. These students are exposed to trauma and physical abuse.

If students have problems at home, it might be hard for them to focus on their studies. This results to their grades dropping, and could include dropping out of school, and some might even lose their passing for learning. In conclusion, all those factors can cause depression in students, which can lead to seriously damaging mental health.

Thankfully, after everything that we have gone through, we managed to survive. If you are a student who is also currently experiencing the same thing, just know that you can survive any obstacle that comes into your life. What we should do to overcome these obstacles in our life is make decisions that can be beneficial for ourselves, and not others.

Put yourself first, and learn how to maintain and manage your time and emotions. Avoid people that cause you nothing but stress as they can only bring ruckus and problems in your life. Everytime you don’t feel at ease at home, go out and take a walk. Learn a new activity or hobby, and make yourself busy. Life is heavy to bear, but we shouldn’t let it bring us down.

MATATAG HEROES: THE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

photo courtesy of Beatriz Kyndra Ferolino

With the ceaseless and vast amount of difficulties that the landscape of Philippine education continues to face, the new MATATAG Curriculum framework was introduced as a new direction for the country to follow in its journey of resolving its basic educational challenges. The Department of Education (DepEd) and Philippine Government recognizes this as an option with a bumpy road; an option that won't be easy to tackle. But amidst this seemingly dim path, there exists a light that guides us and illuminates the pathway towards a brighter future with its wisdom and resilience - our heroes and role models, the teachers.

"We can overcome; we will rally for every Filipino Child," enthused the Vice President and Secretary of Education, Sara Z. Duterte, giving highlight to our collective interest for the betterment of the future of education. In this light, teachers stand out as the ones that have always been quietly shaping the future generation for as long as we could ever remember. They are the architects of our

dreams and guardians of our potential, which is why it is important for us to acknowledge their tireless and unyielding heroism.

In their everyday actions and duties, they do more than just teach us the topics that correspond to what week it currently is; they provide us with a sense of direction and inspiration, and instill curiosity and a thirst for knowledge within our minds. This ignites a lifelong passion for learning within every individual, which we bring along with us as time passes and we grow up. The moment they introduced us to the Abakada Alphabet, they've imparted us with invaluable lessons beyond the confines of a textbook.

The versatility of teachers are also renowned beyond the walls of a classroom - their multifaceted skills and ability to adapt make them fit for other roles as well. There are many instances in which a teacher is also a parent, or a teacher is also someone with another occupation. Without a doubt, they encounter many obstacles in their day-to-day lives due to this. Imagine the exhaustion they must be harboring all day from the difficulty of having to make ends meet for their families. Hence, with their guidance, support, and wisdom, they not only diversely contribute to the lives of students, but also enrich the development of our communities.

With everything that has been stated so far, can't you help but marvel at the creativity and ingenuity of teachers, who never cease to amaze us with their ability to inspire curiosity, foster critical thinking, and ignite a passion for learning? They navigate through various roles with grace and perseverance, embodying what it truly means to be a MATATAG hero with boundless dedication. They've touched lives and uplifted hearts. Through the indelible mark they leave on the world and on us, we can definitely say that a future where children can be fundamentally educated without hindrances is attainable and within our reach.

A PURPOSE AND PASSION FOR THE ART OF TEACHING

photo courtesy of Beatriz Kyndra Ferolino

The journey of being a student-teacher is truly filled with great adventures. Often marked by a variety of obstacles and challenges, it’s no doubt that it is not an easy role to fulfill. Here, you have the privilege of ultimately honing your skills, exemplifying your craft and efforts, and immersing yourself in a new environment in which you are the one speaking in front rather than one of those that are listening, however at the same time, it’s an adventure of discovery, growth, and igniting a passion for the art of teaching.

The first step inside the classroom was one bearing both excitement and apprehension. For Miss Jessa Laure, that is. She’s a 25-year-old student-teacher from Jose Rizal Memorial State University (JRMSU), and her first encounters upon entering her assigned classroom was that she immediately noticed the familiar dust from the chalkboard, mingled with the energy of the eager learners in the atmosphere. With this, she felt the weight of responsibility that settled on her shoulders. But this didn’t worry her; it pushed her to recognize how every lesson, every interaction, and every moment was going to contribute to the students’ educational journey.

To say that she was determined to make it all count was an understatement.

Alongside her determination, there was a feeling of exhaustion that she couldn’t possibly ignore. It was difficult to juggle her studies as a student, duties as a student-teacher, and role as a hardworking daughter in her family. Her current state divided her time in a rather unequal manner, for she had little to no time left to visit her family who were in the province. But despite this, her resiliency dominated amongst all odds. For herself and her family, she continues to strive for greatness and a good future.

Aside from her family, Jessa also admits that there is another thing that serves as a vital driving force to how she gets up everyday. There exists a flame within her

that’s ablaze ever-so-brightly - and that is her passion for teaching. It makes the difficulties that she faces somehow bearable in some ways. The idea of having students listen to her and learn from her simply brings her joy, and knowing that these lessons that they’re learning will be brought along with them as they grow up uplifts her heart.

Though the road awaiting her may be fraught with obstacles and challenges, Jessa embarks upon it with an unyielding sense of purpose and determination, as she knows that whatever circumstances she may face, she will contribute and impacted to the lives and educational journeys of the students that she’s formed genuine connections with, and that with her passion for the art of teaching, not only has she imprinted an interesting impression on her students, but also on herself.

The Regional Schools Press Conference is back at it again, to be held in Dipolog City this coming April 4–6, 2024.

The original schedule of the conference was supposed to be from March 14–16; however, the DepEd Regional Office IX, through the Curriculum and Learning Management Division (CLMD), announced April 4–6 as the official date.

This year's RSPC bears the theme "Charting Truth: Journalism as a Catalyst for Positive Change in the Media Landscape of 2024," which exhibits the power of words to inform and inspire to drive for a positive impact on social media.

The conference is set for 3 days, and all the contests' venues will be held at Zamboanga del Norte National High School Main Campus and Olingan Sports Complex during the opening and closing programs.

Journalists and coaches from other divisions' expenses will also be charged by their schools' budgeting and regulations as they will lodge in various schools within Dipolog City.

Moreover, RSPC has been going on for many years now and still aims to foster camaraderie and enrich learning encounterss through healthy and friendly competitions.

DEPED SCRUTINIZES VIRAL TIKTOK VIDEO

A public school teacher in Metro Manila has been seen angrily scolding her students and misbehaving during her class while she was streaming live on the viral app Tiktok.

The live went viral as netizens shared concerns about the victim students as well as the use of social media during class hours.

"DepEd has existing orders providing guidelines for teaching personnel regarding social media use, including reminders to maintain professionalism," DepEd Assistant Secretary for Field Operations and Deputy Spokespersons, Francis Cesar Bringas, said in a virtual news briefing.

Based on DepEd Order No. 49, while the department acknowledges the rights of teachers to a social media presence, clarifications may be issued regarding limits and restrictions.

A conference was held with the teacher, her students, and the school division superintendent present to address the viral video.

She expressed frustration at being treated disrespectfully and emphasized her qualifications as a licensed professional.

An investigation has also been initiated which focuses on the teacher, still unnamed, to protect her from public scrutiny. A show-cause order was issued to determine her circumstances during class hours, giving her 72 hours to explain her actions.

Moreover, DepEd is committed to upholding professionalism and maintaining standards among its teaching personnel both in and out of the classroom.

Deped will still continue its investigation to determine the appropriate course of action, and clarifications regarding social media use may be forthcoming based on this incident.